

Underground Operations.—Fly Creek Colliery: Operations were confined mainly to pillar-extraction in the South section under very wet difficult conditions.

In the East, development continued along the escarpment from the new dip, a few thousand tons of excellent coal being won opencast.

Development now completed, no pillar-extraction possible.

Underground hydro bin and haulageway therefrom completed.

In the Old Mine, extraction continued in No. 4 and 5 sections. An excellent grade of coal being won under very wet conditions. The limit of safe extraction from the present haulageway has now been reached. Arrangements are being made to penetrate the area from the escarpment at a much lower level, ensuring recovery of a large area of pillars below the level of the present haulage way.

Webb Mine: Development has continued satisfactorily. The main headings have advanced 54 chains from the mine entrance. The seventh panel to the south has just been formed. In order to leave as much of the thick coal to the west as possible for opencast, the new line of development is towards the north, where the coal is thinner and the overburden of greater thickness.

Headings in this direction, breaking off the main West heading at a point 44 chains from the mine entrance, have advanced 10 chains in very good coal. The seam dips to the north, having dipped 30 ft. in 10 chains, and will reach a point 70 ft. still lower about 28 chains from the present heading face.

A new power-line has been erected over Webb Mine and the power conveyed by cable down a bore hole near the working-places. A pump has been installed in the north dip.

Opencast: Production during the past few months has shown a decline, largely because of the thicker overburden. This difficulty will be solved with the arrival of additional machines within a month or so. A large area just ahead of the present opencast workings has been proved by bores to contain over 1,500,000 tons, average thickness 35 ft., overburden not exceeding 2 to 1. Analysis reveals that the coal is of high quality with medium sulphur and ash content.

Close boring at 200 ft. centres continues over an adjacent area of 250 acres where it is expected to prove several million tons of coal capable of being won by opencast methods.

During the year we were successful in recovering coal from abandoned areas previously worked underground where coal that could not be safely won by underground methods was recovered by opencast working.

Area 1, Coal Island: 20,000 tons were recovered twenty-seven years after underground extraction had been completed. This figure represents more than 50 per cent. of the original coal in the area.

Area 2, Stable Pillar Fire Area: In this area a fire broke out twenty-seven years ago and continued to burn until about twelve years ago. The coal was 30 ft. thick, with the floor of the old workings 20 ft. above the stone floor. The fire had destroyed all coal above the level of the floor of the old workings, but had not damaged the unworked coal below. Thirty-five thousand tons of excellent bottom coal were recovered. The rock overburden had disintegrated in the heat of the fire, rendering it comparatively easy to remove by bulldozers.

MILLERTON STATE COLLIERY

Coal-winning.—The Department commenced to operate this mine on the 1st April, 1948.

The gross output for the year from the colliery was 59,317 tons 13 cwt. After allowing for waste (296 tons 19 cwt.) and coal used on works (147 tons 4 cwt.), there remained for disposal a net output of 58,873 tons 10 cwt.